



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS  
**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

December 15, 2021

GOV21-254

Ur M. Jaddou  
Director  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
111 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Follow-up on request for discretionary extension of "Parole in Place" for island-nation participants of the 11<sup>th</sup> Pacific Mini-Games in 2022

Dear Director Jaddou:

This is a follow-up correspondence to my letter of July 21, 2021 to Tracy Renaud, then Acting Director of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) will be host to the 11<sup>th</sup> Pacific Mini Games from June 17 through June 25, 2022. The event, awarded to the CNMI in 2014 by the Pacific Games Council General Assembly, is set to include over 1500 visiting participants including athletes, coaches, sports officials, and government officials, from many of the island nations of Micronesia, Polynesia, Melanesia, and Australia. The CNMI is looking to the event help boost our economy, which has been severely affected by the loss of our tourism industry during this COVID-19 pandemic.

A number of the island nations set to participate in the games are not provided Visa waivers under current United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) regulations. Because of the difficulties that acquiring a US Visa poses to many of these island nations, which include in cases their remote locations, cost, and lack of access to a US embassy or consulate, we are concerned that we will lose a large number of participants without some contingency for legal entry into the CNMI outside of the Visa process.

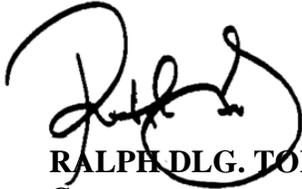
We are seeking the assistance of the USCIS with a discretionary extension of a "Parole in Place" for the following island nation participants of the Pacific Mini-Games. These are:

Fiji	Kiribati
Samoa	Solomon Islands
Tonga	Tuvalu
Vanuatu	

A “Parole in Place”, if granted, would be specific to the participants of these games from these islands, and limited to the duration of the games.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We stand ready to provide you with any additional information you may need.

Sincerely,



**RALPH DLG. TORRES**  
Governor

cc: Vicente Babauta, CEO, 11<sup>th</sup> Pacific Mini Games  
Marco Peter, Chairman, 11<sup>th</sup> Pacific Mini Games Organizing Committee



**U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services**

March 16, 2022

Ralph DLG. Torres  
Governor  
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands  
Caller Box 10007  
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Governor Torres:

Thank you for your December 15, 2021 letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) requesting that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) authorize parole for citizens of Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu who intend to visit the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) in order to participate in the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games in June 2022. I apologize for the delayed response. I understand the particularly severe economic effects the COVID-19 pandemic has caused in the CNMI and the importance of events such as the Pacific Mini Games in your recovery.

To clarify, DHS regulations govern the visa waiver program. These regulations are administered and enforced by our sister component, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the DHS agency that is responsible for operating the ports of entry in the CNMI and elsewhere in the United States. You also refer to “parole in place.” That is a term typically used to refer to the parole of noncitizens already present in the United States. We understand that you are referring to the parole of noncitizens coming from abroad into the United States, which we normally refer to as “humanitarian parole” or just “parole.”

Section 212(d)(5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) allows the Secretary of Homeland Security to use his discretion to parole any noncitizen applying for admission into the United States temporarily for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit. Parole is not intended to avoid normal visa processing procedures and timelines. I encourage prospective participants in the Pacific Mini Games to make their best efforts to secure the appropriate visitor’s visa to the United States. However, if that is not reasonably possible, individuals can request parole by filing Form I-131, Application for Travel Document, with USCIS. USCIS will consider requests for parole on a case-by-case basis in the exercise of discretion.

USCIS will review any Form I-131 received from individuals seeking parole to participate in the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games. Instructions for applying can be found at <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/explore-my-options/humanitarian-parole>. USCIS is also actively exploring avenues to support your request.

Ralph DLG. Torres  
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Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Should you require any additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ur M. Jaddou", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Ur M. Jaddou  
Director